

Q. # 1981

Doc. No. 2515 B

Page 1

Extract from  
Interrogation of Hideki Tojo  
26 March 1946

p. 1 - 3

A Yesterday there was some interrogation about prisoners and there is something I would like to say about that.

Q I was about to bring that question up and ask if you didn't have something you wanted to say.

A Since the end of the war, I have read about the inhumane acts committed by Japanese army and navy personnel. These were certainly not the intention of those in authority, that is, of the General Staffs, or the War or Navy Departments, or myself. We did not even suspect that such things had happened. The Emperor especially, because of his benevolence, would have had a contrary feeling. Such acts are not permissible in Japan. The character of the Japanese people is such that they believe that neither Heaven nor Earth would permit such things. It will be too bad if people in the world believe that these inhumane acts are the result of Japanese character. /The preceding portion of the answer was read back to the witness who agreed as to its correctness./

The second point with regard to prisoners: The treatment of prisoners is the responsibility of various army commanders, hence I relied upon them to have regard for humane considerations and to follow the terms of international treaties and rules. Of course, since I was the supervisor of military administration, I am completely responsible.

The third point is that Japanese manners and customs are different from those of Europe and America and the standard of living is also different. These things affected the treatment of prisoners. There are some things I want to explain about this.

a) In regard to inhumane acts, these are not permitted under Japanese manners or customs either.

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a) In regard to inhumane acts, these are not permitted under Japanese manners or customs either.

p. 1 - 3 cont'd

b) In regard to the difference in the standard of living, the treaties provide that prisoners are to be given the same rations as the troops of the detaining nation. That was also directed in orders that were issued. Because of the difference in the standard of living, the American and European prisoners thought when they were given the same rations as Japanese troops that the rations were very very unappetizing. Particularly, on the battlefields, this feeling was very strong, I believe. In regard to life in the barracks */susohe/*, the barracks, for example, at Omori, which are field barracks */yaoichi/*, they would not be thought bad by the Japanese troops, but the European and American prisoners thought they were very poor.

c) The Japanese idea about being taken prisoner is different from that in Europe and America. In Japan, it is regarded as a disgrace. Under Japanese criminal law, anyone who becomes a prisoner while still able to resist has committed a criminal offense, the maximum punishment for which is the death penalty. In Europe and America, it is different. A person who is taken prisoner is honored because he has discharged his duties, but in Japan, it is very different.

d) I want to say something now about the feeling with regard to slapping on the side of the face. In Japanese families where the educational standard is low, slapping is used as a means of training. In the Japanese army and navy, although this is forbidden, it continues in fact because of the influence of the customs of the people. This, of course, is a custom that ought to be corrected; it ought to be stopped; but I don't think it is a crime. It is something that comes from custom. That is all I want to say on this.

There is a correction I would like to make regarding yesterday's interrogation. Yesterday, I was asked if I had met Lieutenant General HOMMA. I said that I had not met him, but this year when I was in Omori Prison, I met him. One other point. When an army commander came back to Japan during the war, he would make a situation report to the Emperor. On such occasions, he would be accompanied by the Chief of Staff and the War Minister. I do not well remember, it may be that I met HOMMA on such an occasion since he was an army commander. That is all I wanted to say.

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NO. 1

20

1981

Doc 2515C

文書第三五二号

第四一九四六年三月二十六日 東條英機 質問答

問 日本政府が一九四一年一月五日頃スルニ政府が通告日本が發生する天知ス  
戰爭の場合に於て及テオトテ於テ調停サテ條約ヲ合テスル國際  
條約(國際法)信屬ス建戦調停關スル法律上ノ規定(預備)等  
スル事ナリカ(通告)スルニ責メ見ユセカ

答 思ヒユセカサテ多クシトス

問 貴方ハ約束ガ事ニス執行ナカタルコトヲ現在承知ニナルト述  
テ中ニカ何故ナリ守ラカスニカ 質問ノ意味ガ解リニカ

答 ハ質問ノ前ニ話ス所屬對スル非人道的ノ取扱ニ關スルコトヲ解ス  
ニ等條約破テトス政府ノ意圖ナリ又私ノ意圖ナリナリコ  
等事件ガ起キタルニ頗ル遺憾ニトナリヌハ等對スル責任私  
ニナリヌ

問 貴方ハ今日ニ等殘虐行為、殘虐ナ行屬、非人道的ノ取扱ノ想像  
タニスニナリト述ベタ米英兩國カ外ニス、等事柄就ニナリス、  
他、政府ヲ通告付屬ナク宣稱ニル細目ニタテ抗議貴國外務省  
ニ提出ニナルコトヲ言フニ事ガ言ハルニカ

答 人道ヲ重ニ條約、條項ヲ遵守スル責任、問題ハ各軍司令官ノ責任  
ナリヌ依等ハ等、事ヲ遵守ニナルモノト私ハ信ジナリヌコガ私答  
ニナリヌ

問 ンナニハ問題ニ就テ、ニ等敬テ、抗議ガ提出サレタモ拘テ貴方ハ依  
然トニ戰地、司令官ヲ信用シ抗議ヲ信ジカタルニカ

答 前ニ事ニタテ抗議ガ来ルト私ハ責任ニ關係軍司令官ニハ抗議  
略定ニ過言ナシガトナリト思ヒナリヌハ抗議ガ適切ナリナリ





Doc. No. 2515 C

Page 1

Extract from  
Interrogation of Hideki Tojo  
26 March 1946

p. 4 - 5

Q Do you not recall that the Japanese Government informed the United States, through the Swiss Government on or about 30 January 1941, that Japan would follow, in the war then pending: (1) The various international conventions, including those signed at The Hague and Geneva; (2) International law; (3) The rules and customs of law as to prisoners and civilians?

A I don't recall it, but I think it is very likely.

Q You state that you are now aware of the fact that that promise was not kept or carried out. Why was it not complied with or kept? Do you understand the question?

A I understand it as regards the inhumane acts towards prisoners that we have talked about. It was the Government's intention to follow these conventions, and it was mine. The fact that these things happened is very much to be regretted. The responsibility for them is mine.

Q You mentioned today that you did not even suspect the occurrence of these atrocities and the inhumane treatment of prisoners. How can you say this when the United States and Great Britain, through the Swiss and other governments, made numerous written and detailed complaints to your Foreign Office about these very matters?

A The matter of responsibility for humane considerations and the following of treaty provisions was the responsibility of the various army commanders. I believed that they were following them. That is my answer.

Q So that, although these numerous complaints were made on these matters, you still trusted the commanders in the field and did not believe the complaints. Is that true?

A As I said before, when a protest would come in, I would forward it to the responsible army commander involved for action which I thought was taken. I could not tell whether the protest was appropriate or not, and I presumed that investigations were made, followed by courts martial or other suitable action.

p. 4 - 5 cont'd

Q Did you hear of any courts martial or suitable action taken in connection with the atrocities and inhumane acts against American prisoners in the "Bataan March" that we spoke about yesterday and today?

A I think that the commanding officer took legal measures.

Q On what do you base that statement?

A The facts of that case would have gone to the commanding officer who had the responsibility for taking appropriate action.

Q Then, it is only your speculation that such action was taken?

A Yes, but I think it was taken because it was his responsibility.

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Doc 2515C

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NO. 1

文書第三五五〇号

第一九四六年三月二十六日 東條英機 質問答

問 日本政府一九四一年一月三日頃より政府を通じて日本に發生する力を知りて  
戦争場面に於ては、於て調印され、條約、合意、程、此、國際  
條約、國際法、停戦、及、非、戰、闘、員、關、する法律、上、規定、復、例、を、遵、守  
する事、が、力、を、通、して、貴、方、に、伝、へ、る、事、が、

答 思ふに、此、が、貴、方、の、意、図、に、對、して、

問 貴方、の、約束、が、守、る、に、遵、行、せ、ら、れ、る、事、が、現、在、承、知、さ、れ、る、上、述、  
の、事、が、何、故、に、守、ら、れ、る、事、が、貴、方、の、意、味、が、解、り、る、事、が、

答 貴方、の、前、述、の、停、戦、條、約、に、對、し、非、人、道、的、に、取、扱、さ、れ、る、事、が、解、り、る、事、  
に、等、條、約、に、對、し、政府、意、圖、に、對、し、又、私、意、圖、に、對、し、此、  
等、事、件、が、起、き、た、事、に、對、し、頗、る、遺憾、に、思、ふ、事、が、貴、方、に、私、  
に、對、し、

問 貴方、の、今、日、の、停、戦、條、約、に、對、し、非、人、道、的、に、取、扱、さ、れ、る、事、が、  
又、此、に、對、し、述、び、る、事、が、英、美、兩、國、の、外、に、對、し、等、事、柄、就、き、た、事、が、  
他、の、政府、に、通、して、外、通、に、對、し、言、明、さ、れ、る、事、に、對、し、抗、議、貴、國、外、務、省、  
に、提、出、さ、れ、る、事、が、言、へ、る、事、が、

答 人道、に、對、し、條、約、條、項、に、遵、守、さ、れ、る、責任、問題、各、軍、司、令、官、に、責任、  
に、對、し、彼、等、の、事、に、遵、守、さ、れ、る、事、に、對、し、私、信、に、對、し、此、が、私、  
に、對、し、

問 此、に、對、し、問題、に、對、し、此、等、事、件、に、對、し、抗、議、が、提、出、さ、れ、る、事、が、貴、方、に、依、  
然、に、對、し、戰、地、司、令、官、に、信用、に、對、し、抗、議、が、信、に、對、し、此、が、私、  
に、對、し、

答 前、述、の、事、に、對、し、抗、議、が、來、る、事、に、對、し、私、信、に、對、し、關係、軍、司、令、官、に、抗、議、  
が、提、出、さ、れ、る、事、に、對、し、抗、議、が、適、切、に、對、し、



Dec. 25/50

以上が解りて之を分取調を行つた事法會議、使つて  
 之を復還せしむべきと推測せしむる。

問. 昨又今日話多々行進し、於て下が、人待房并に作らるる  
 行爲と非人道的行爲に關する何等法會議或復還せしむべき  
 取らざらんことを聞かす。

答. 其司令官が合意復還を取らざらんと思ふ。

問. 何の根據を以てせしむべき。

答. 事件、復還、適当に復還を取らざらんを司令官<sup>信</sup>に運送せしむる  
 と思ふ。

問. 以上が解りて復還を取らざらんを貴方、推測せしむべき。

答. 之を以て司令官、責任を以てせしむる復還、取らざらんと思ふ。

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Doc. No. 2515 E

Page 1

Extract from  
Interrogation of Hideki Tojo  
26 March 1946

p. 6 - 7

- Q You state that when complaints were made by the United States and Great Britain about the inhumane treatment of their prisoners of war, the complaints would come to the Foreign Ministry and then to the War Department. Were copies of these complaints sent to the Emperor, or was the Emperor informed in any way of them?
- A No, he was not. I handled them on my own responsibility.
- Q Why was not the Emperor, as Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese army and navy, advised of these complaints?
- A I thought it was all right to handle them on my own responsibility.
- Q Since the Emperor had ordered that prisoners of war should not be mistreated, did he not have the right to know of these protests.
- A I understood the Emperor's feelings very well. On my own responsibility, I sent these protests to the responsible field commanders for investigation as to the facts. The Emperor was busy and had a great deal of work so I did this on my own. Consequently, the Emperor is not responsible in connection with this matter. I am responsible.

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Doc-2515E

(Page 1) 天皇陛下の御事

一九四六年三月二十六日東京英機訊問抜萃

問 米英兩國が自國の存続に對し非人道的な取扱に就いて抗議、提  
言、場合、抗議、何時、外務省、また、陸軍省へ来た貴上、  
述、云、云、抗議、爲、天皇、提、お、し、ミ、カ、又、天皇、ハ、一、等、抗議  
ニ、就、一、休、報、告、交、ハ、サ、タ、デ、ス、カ、

答 一、ヤ、天皇、報告、交、ハ、サ、タ、デ、ス、私、ハ、一、等、獨、断、テ、處、理、シ、タ、ス、

問 何故日本陸海軍、大、天、帥、タ、リ、天皇、ガ、一、等、抗議、ヲ、知、ル、カ、

答 一、等、抗議、私、獨、断、テ、處、理、シ、タ、ス、又、ト、考、ヘ、タ、ス、

問 天皇、存、続、ヲ、是、待、ミ、タ、ラ、ト、一、コ、ト、ニ、命、令、シ、タ、カ、ス、天皇、ハ、一、等、  
抗議、ヲ、知、ル、權、利、ガ、ア、リ、デ、ハ、イ、デ、ス、カ、

答 一、天皇、待、命、持、タ、コ、ト、解、ハ、シ、タ、ス、私、ハ、獨、断、テ、一、等、抗議、ヲ、實、狀、請  
在、三、重、臣、ヲ、復、地、司、令、官、ニ、送、ラ、タ、デ、ス、天皇、待、命、ノ、非、常、ニ、派  
山、生、事、ヲ、持、テ、居、テ、ミ、タ、ラ、デ、私、獨、断、テ、ハ、シ、タ、デ、ス、從、テ、天皇、ハ、一  
等、關、于、ハ、責、任、ハ、ア、リ、デ、ス、私、ハ、責、任、ガ、ア、リ、デ、ス、

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